



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Public Protection Cabinet

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Officials urge extreme caution when using fireworks this season *Dry weather conditions increase chance of accidental fire***

**Frankfort, Ky.** (June 22, 2012) – The Kentucky Division of Forestry and the Division of Fire Prevention are reminding Kentuckians to be safe with fireworks this Fourth of July, especially in light of the dry weather.

“Given the current drought conditions, we urge Kentuckians across the state to take extra precaution when using fireworks this holiday season,” said Leah MacSwords, director of the Division of Forestry. “Sparks from fireworks can and do ignite wildfires especially in dried grass and fields, and the slightest wind can make these fires spread quickly.

“The Division of Forestry has been responding to wildfires throughout June because of the extra dry conditions,” she said.

While most Kentuckians are cautious with fireworks, state fire marshal Bill Swope asks the public to abide by common sense safety measures and Kentucky state law. “Citizens should pay close attention to local officials and be aware of burn bans in their area and potential prohibitions against celebrating with fireworks,” said Swope.

Safety guidelines set by state law must be followed, he said. They include that people under 18 cannot sell fireworks unless supervised by a parent or guardian; people under 18 cannot purchase fireworks; fireworks cannot be used within 200 feet of a structure, vehicle or other person; and fireworks cannot be sold to anyone who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. In addition, local vendors and citizens are required to

comply with any and all local ordinances that apply to the sale, purchase and use of fireworks.

The Division of Fire Prevention offers the following safety tips to keep your family safe over the upcoming July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday and throughout the summer:

- Use fireworks outdoors only.
- Obey local laws. If fireworks are not legal where you live, do not use them.
- Always have a bucket of water or a working water hose nearby.
- Only use fireworks as intended. Don't try to alter them or combine them.
- Never relight a "dud" firework. Wait 20 minutes and then soak it in a bucket of water.
- Use common sense. Spectators should keep a safe distance from the shooter and the shooter should wear safety glasses.
- Alcohol and fireworks do not mix. Have a "designated adult shooter."
- Do not use homemade fireworks or illegal explosives: They can kill you!
- Report illegal explosives to the fire or police department in your community.

Last year a new state law went into effect that allows for the purchase of fireworks that are known as '1.4 Consumer Fireworks.' Swope reminds consumers that the new law does not mean that fireworks you see at professional shows are legal; they are not. Providing that local ordinances allow, Kentuckians can purchase and use popular fireworks like Roman candles, firecrackers and bottle rockets.

"Safety and supervision are keys to a successful celebration. However, I recommend that families attend local firework displays instead of celebrating with fireworks at home. Let the professionals entertain your family."

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